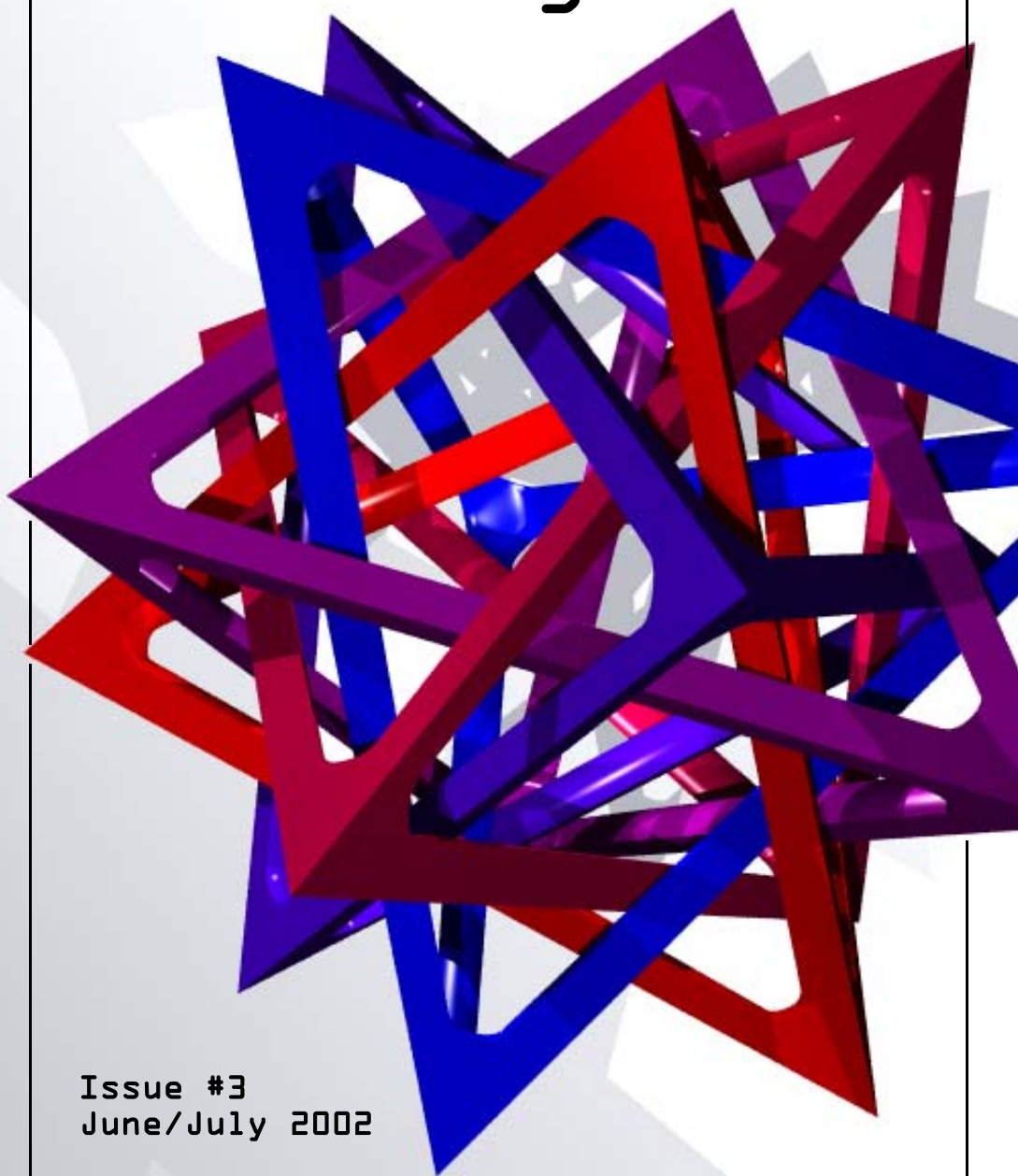


nerdling



Issue #3
June/July 2002

a zine of physics, maths and sci-fi

Did you know that Cindy Crawford started studying at university on a Chemical Engineering scholarship? No? It just goes to show that you can never be sure that the person you're looking at in an advertisement, or the person you're sitting next to on the bus, isn't a closet nerd. Whether they be into maths or books or history or whatever, nerds are all around us. Many of them look deceptively like normal people. Some may not even know they are nerds.

nerdling's aim is to celebrate the nerd within. We encourage you to make peace with your inner nerd, instead of trying to hide it away as TV and magazines sometimes make us feel we should. And it's just as important to let other people know it's OK to be nerdy. Give them the support they may need in order to come out of the closet. Turn to the person next to you right now, put a hand on their shoulder and say, "You're a nerd, and I think that's great." It could change their life.

Of course, there will always be the die-hard nerds, the elite of our corps, the ones to whom the Platonic solids will always be the greatest expression of beauty in our universe, the ones who could not be lured away from science and maths even by the promise of a lucrative modelling career. For these people, it would be impossible to hide their nerdiness under a bushel.

Whether you're a hard-core nerd or just a nerd-in-training, we hope you'll find something in this issue to enjoy. If you love reading good books by fellow maths-junkies, you should check out the article on page 4 and discover how to find good fiction outside the genre of sci-fi. If you've got some spare time on your hands (or even if you don't) it's worth reading about our latest fetish, the ray-tracing program 'POV-Ray' that created this issue's cover image. Find out more about it on page 16. Read the personal confessions and startling story of a science-phobic on page 12. Plus there's a nerd glossary, movie reviews, quotes, and more. Eat your heart out, Cindy!



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Cover image: Compound of Five Tetrahedra. Rendered in POV-Ray, based on code by Chris Foster

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Maths & Physics in Literature

Science fiction might be fun to read, but most of it would be treated with disdain by English professors. What makes science fiction different to high-brow ‘literature’? Where do the two meet?

Literature is defined as “writings whose value lies in beauty of form or emotional effect”, whereas science fiction’s purpose is to deal with imagined scientific discoveries, worlds or futures. Although science fiction stories frequently carry a moral, usually in the form of a warning about where our society is going, very few are cited as ‘classics’ alongside works by Austen and Joyce, for example.

The most obvious reason for this is that the writing of most sci-fi authors sucks. Not their ideas, mind you, just their writing. Philip K. Dick, whose works have been made into the movies ‘Bladerunner’ and ‘Minority Report’, wrote with a lousy style. Arthur C. Clarke’s novel ‘2001: A Space Odyssey’ is a very clumsy read. It’s not their style that we love, it’s their insight and ideas, and that’s often enough to make great science fiction. But not great literature.

The genre of science fiction that receives most recognition as literature, is that of the dystopian (or anti-utopian) society. These works can be classified loosely as sci-fi and include George Orwell’s ‘1984’, Anthony Burgess’ ‘A Clockwork Orange’, almost anything by Kurt Vonnegut (one of my favourite authors), and Ray Bradbury’s ‘Fahrenheit 451’. However, these novels tend to deal with societal changes more than hard-core physics or maths or technology. As Kurt Vonnegut said, a lot of these guys know “diddley-squat about science”.

So is a love and understanding of science and maths confined to ‘mere’ science fiction, or is it possible to find true literature that also shows an affinity to these fields? The answer, of course, is that you’ve just got to know where to look. Listed below are some examples of books that I’ve read and loved, which are not only great works of literature, but deal with maths and science in a knowledgeable and intimate way. You might want to check some of them out yourself.

Italo Calvino: ‘Cosmicomics’

This guy is one of the masters of Italian literature, and luckily for us most of his stuff has been translated into English. ‘Cosmicomics’ is a collection of loosely-related short stories based around astronomical concepts, which Calvino extrapolates into imaginary scenarios. His first story, for example, begins with a snippet of astronomical fact—that the moon is slowly spiralling away from the earth—and continues with an extrapolation back to a time when the moon must have been only a few meters away from the earth’s surface! Wait till you see what he does

with the more abstract concepts of parallel lines never meeting, or absolute space and time not existing. His writing style is beautiful and strange and his ideas are like nothing you will have ever seen before. If you read this and become addicted to his style, read his most famous work, ‘If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler’. I can’t say enough good things about this guy: read him.



Primo Levi: ‘The Periodic Table’

Despite its title, this book *is* a work of fiction. Primo Levi (also an Italian writer—they seem to be masters in this field) is a chemist by training, and spent eight months in Auschwitz in the second world war, from which he draws many of his observations on human nature. ‘The Periodic Table’ is a semi-autobiographical work in which he associates elements of his life with elements of the periodic table. If you’ve ever felt you know chemical elements like your friends, you will enjoy this book.

Peter Høeg, ‘Miss Smilla’s Feeling for Snow’

Peter Høeg is an amazing writer. His style is sparse and clear and quiet and always hints at the beauty in unexpected things—like the work of Euclid, for example, who is the protagonist Smilla’s favourite ‘author’. This book is a gripping murder-mystery conspiracy-theory science-fiction tale, and although the general science fiction premise is slightly dubious (I’m not going to tell you what it is—that would ruin the story), the incidental references to Smilla’s love of Euclid’s ‘The Elements’ and Newton’s belief in absolute frames of reference will send tingles down your spine (well, they did for me, anyway). Also read his ‘Tales of the Night’.

*From Peter Høeg’s
‘Tales of the Night’*

Whenever he felt down-hearted he could console himself with the scintillating logic of Bertrand Russell, if he were feeling cocky he would read one of the unsuccessful attempts at a geometric trisectioning of the angle and when his mind was in a turmoil he found tranquillity and stringency in Euclid’s *Elements*.

Umberto Eco, ‘Foucault’s Pendulum’

This book starts with ‘That’s when I saw the Pendulum. [...] the time it took the sphere to swing from end to end was determined by an arcane conspiracy between the most timeless of measures: the singularity of the point of suspension, the duality of the plane’s dimensions, the triadic beginning of π , the secret quadratic nature of the root, and the unnumbered perfection of the circle itself.’ This is pretty typical of the writing in this classic work—Eco takes science and maths (and history and language and computer programming, etc) and writes them as symbols or images rich with deep meaning and significance. A warning—it’s harder reading than the other books listed here. But: it’s a rollicking good tale.

Kurt Vonnegut, ‘Breakfast of Champions’

Not only is this book really easy to read (you’ll be sucked in like, ahem, a black hole) but it’s really funny, really entertaining, really deep and it’s literature too! The main character in this book is Vonnegut’s alter ego, the anti-hero Kilgore Trout, who is a wannabe sci-fi writer whose stories only ever get published as filler in porn magazines. As in most of Vonnegut’s other books, the story is interspersed with plot sketches of Trout’s works, which are hilarious. He knows his science, too, having trained as a biochemist, and having a physicist as a brother. After a Vonnegut book I always feel like my soul has been cleansed; he writes with a great understanding of individuals and of humanity on a down-to-earth level. He’s just great.

(While you’re at it, you should read all of his other stuff too: start with ‘Timequake’ and ‘Slaughterhouse 5’ and move on to ‘The Sirens of Titan’, ‘Slapstick’ and ‘Player Piano’.)

[Ghh-chh]

Captain, I would
hope for your own **sake**
that you remembered to
tape the last episode of
Star Trek: Voyager for
me. [ghh-chh.] That
Seven of Nine is such
a **babe**.

Of **course** we
remembered, sir.
And by the way, sir,
your **cape** is caught
in your **socks** and
sandals.



Turn to the Dork Side
Read nerdl ing!

movie review

ARMAGEDDON

Mission Control Guy: [Looking gravel] The asteroid is tumbling on all... three axes sir. [Dramatic Silence] We weren't expecting that.

Sometimes you come across a movie that has such bad science in it that it's almost delicious (see article "How to Detect Bad Sci-fi", Issue 2). Armageddon is such a film. Channel 7 screened it on TV in early June, and even though I only saw a 15 minute chunk out of the middle of it, I saw enough to inspire me to write this review. If you haven't seen the film yourself, heed this as a warning and don't waste your three bucks on it at Video Ezy. Or else go out and get it right now and enjoy it for its astounding hilarity.

The first warning sign is that it's got Bruce Willis in it.

The premise of the movie, as far as I could tell, is that a giant asteroid 'the size of Texas' is about to crash into Earth. (Ooh, that's a new one.) NASA or whoever decide that they need to send up a team to drill the asteroid into little bits (?). For some reason it's easier to train an oil drilling team to be astronauts, than vice versa, and so Brucey and his mates get sent up into space.

Now the fun *really* starts. They send the guys up in a shuttle which zooms around with a big jet of flame coming out of its engines the whole time. There's wonderful engine sound propagation though space (a classic sci-fi movie trick). Their first stop is Mir where they get the bright idea to spin it, hence creating 'gravity'. Amazingly, the tacked-together hunk-of-junk stays in one piece—until they blow it up (as you do). A two minute trip later and they're on the other side of the moon. That's some mighty fine acceleration. And then they finally land on the asteroid, where they experience a gravitational acceleration of 9.81 m.s^{-2} (despite the fact it's as big as Texas) and then have to drill only 800 m to get to its centre (despite the fact it's as big as Texas). Fantastic.

The plot is also helped by the fact that the asteroid is being kept a 'media secret'. Does this mean there are no amateur astronomer sightings of something that big, closer than the moon, and flashing all the time from things exploding on/near it? Oh, there also happen to be Gatling guns in space, ready for use when Brucey needs them. Hurrah for NASA, always thinking of everything.

A classic work of science fiction. And then, of course, there's the other 75 minutes...



QUIZ: HOW NERDY ARE YOU?

*In the spirit of such great intellectual magazines such as Cosmopolitan and Ralph, **nerdling** brings you the definitive nerdiness quiz.*

For each question below for which you can answer "yes" or "true", put a tick in the box. Count up the ticks and see how you rate as a nerd.

- ☐ Have you ever derived an equation you found in a science text?
- ☐ Do you know most of the words to "The Lumberjack Song" by Monty Python?
- ☐ Can you quote the permittivity of free space? (epsilon naught)
 - ☐ Do you own a "reverse polish notation" calculator?
 - ☐ Do you own any log or semi-log paper?
 - ☐ Have you ever watched something and stated "that's physically impossible" (due to Newton's laws, etc.)?
- ☐ Do you refer to the various "Treks" as "TOS" (The Original Series), "TNG" (The Next Generation) and "DS9" (Deep Space 9) or similar?
- ☐ Have you ever gotten pizza delivered to the lab/office/science building?

- ☐ Have you ever commented: "If I drive fast enough at the red light, it'll appear green."
- ☐ Do you know the wavelengths in the visible spectrum?
- ☐ Have you ever wanted to know something for no apparent reason?
- ☐ Have you ever been laughed at for wanting to know something?
- ☐ Have you ever used a computer for more than 8 hours continuously?
- ☐ Have you ever used computer symbology elsewhere? (goto, *, etc.)
- ☐ Have you ever owned a light sabre?
- ☐ Do you own a Rubik's cube?
- ☐ Have you ever tried to calculate the number of possible permutations a Rubik's Cube can have?
- ☐ Have you ever argued over who was a better commander of the Enterprise?
- ☐ Do you own any clothing with scientific knowledge printed on it? (e.g. t-shirts with Maxwell's equations)
- ☐ Are you planning to double-check your answers to this test?

20	<i>Hail, O Nerd Master, virgin sliders I sacrifice unto you.</i>
18—19	<i>Desperately seeking cybernetic interface implanted in your brain</i>
16—17	<i>"Revenge of the Nerds" poster-child</i>
14—15	<i>You probably own more surge protectors than cooking utensils</i>
11—13	<i>YOU need some serious help</i>
9—10	<i>Your social life needs some serious help</i>
7—8	<i>You refuse to live anywhere without home pizza delivery</i>
5—6	<i>Closet nerd</i>
3—4	<i>Nerd-in-training</i>
0—2	<i>Nerd-wannabe</i>

Scoring

The Rimmer and Lister Awards

For Good and Bad Pop Science

June/July 2002



A Lister Award to *Minority Report* for some good science-fiction. It proves that Hollywood and science *can* mix... as long as the right producer uses work from the right science-fiction author. Hooray for Philip K. Dick!



A Rimmer Award to the movie *Spiderman* for bad portrayal of a nerd, total misunderstanding of the scientific process, fantastically two-dimensional evil scientist, and laughable opinion of what the experimentation is all about (mad scientist, just before he fries his brain by experimenting on himself: "Laboratory work is *all about* taking risks!"). Plus, a lousy plot.

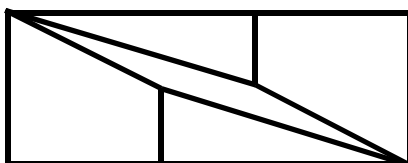
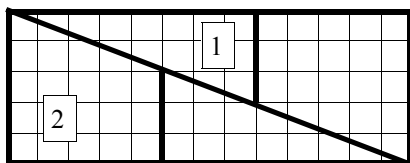


A Cat Award (all style, no substance) to *Men in Black II* for 90 minutes of eye candy including some cool aliens, funky guns and the obligatory 'perhaps our universe, too, is insignificant' ending. But... there's not much else going for it. Oh, except for the scene where Will Smith lands in the big pile of clear tubes, ha ha ha har. And the cameo appearance of Michael Jackson, who is a science fiction story unto himself.

Solutions to Paradoxes on 'The Page of Lies', page 6, Issue #2:

Lie 1: Line 5 involves an illegal operation—dividing by zero. This is because we are dividing by $(a-1)$, and we have defined $a = 1$. Thus, no conclusions can be drawn from line 5 onward.

Lie 2: Compare the gradient of the long diagonal line as part of shape 1 (gradient of 3 in 8, or 0.375) with that as part of shape 2 (gradient of 2 in 5, or 0.400). They are not the same, hence the shapes do not really fit together! In reality, there is a lozenge-shaped gap in the figure, as exaggerated in the figure at right. This gap has area equal to exactly one small square, accounting for the apparent gain in area of one unit.



quotes

I've heard that the government wants to put a tax on the mathematically ignorant. Funny, I thought that's what the lottery was.
-- Gallagher

"We're gong to turn this team around 360 degrees."
— *Basketballer Jason Kidd, showing his skillful grasp of ge-*



I know that this defies the law of gravity, but, you see, I never studied law.
-Bugs Bunny

"The good Christian should beware of mathematicians and all those who make empty prophecies. The danger already exists that mathematicians have made a covenant with the devil to darken the spirit and confine man in the bonds of Hell." -- St. Augustine (354-430)

P.S. Augustine did really say that, but in his time there was no difference between mathematicans and astrologists. Astrologists told the future, which was diabolic.

For those who want some proof that physicists are human, the proof is in the idiocy of all the different units which they use for measuring energy. —Richard P. Feynman, *The Character of Physical Law*

Radio has no future — Lord Kelvin, 1897, on Marconi's experiments.
Trust you will avoid the gigantic mistake of alternating current. - Lord Kelvin (1824-1907), writing to Niagara Falls Power Company.

Physics Phobias & maths

A personal account

Hi. My name is Albert—well, that's not my real name, but I want to be anonymous. I've been through a lot of bad times recently because of physics and maths. I wouldn't have written this down if it wasn't for a friend persuading me to. Even now just thinking about physics makes me feel cold and I have to really fight to keep the voices out of my head. But my friend said that if I shared my story I might help other people out there who have the same condition as I do. So here goes.

I started uni four years ago. I was really motivated back then. I'd got good marks at school and come first in my year and my teachers told me I'd be really good at engineering or maths. Well, I had a few mates who wanted to be engineers and let's just say I didn't really look up to them as role models, I figured I could build things in my own time and use my degree to learn something more interesting. So I enrolled in a science degree and started out doing heaps of physics and maths. My mates thought I was a nerd but I was still playing touch footy and doing kickboxing so they were too scared to rip me off about it too much.

Anyway I was going pretty good until half way through first semester when I was doing a chemistry lab and I went to get the hydrochloric acid and wham! I got this cold shaky feeling all over and a sick feeling in my stomach like I was standing on the edge of a very tall building. I put the acid back and felt fine again, so I went to get the phenolphthalein while I was waiting and bam! there it was again. It was like I was allergic to working with chemicals, and not just the dangerous ones but even water if it was used as part of the experiment.

This went on for weeks and got worse and worse. I couldn't control it. I was about to fail chemistry when I thought, I'll give anything a try to work out what's going on, so I saw the university counsellor who referred me to a shrink who told me what my problem was: it's called chemophobia, it means a fear of working with chemicals. It's a proper medical condition. The shrink wrote me a



thematical misgivings

unt of suffering

certificate and I got an exemption for my lab. Alright!

So then the next semester I was doing a physics subject and there was this test on Newtonian mechanics. So there I am studying velocity and acceleration and it's way past midnight and suddenly bam! There's that feeling again. Like, really sick and shaky and I can't breathe properly. Exactly like for chemistry! So I figure, maybe I've got this phobia thing for more than just chemicals. I go onto the internet and do a bit of research and find there's this thing called tachophobia, a fear of speed. But it's worse than that—there's also kinesophobia, which means that you fear motion of any kind. Now that I know I'm suffering from two of these things at once, I figure it would be dangerous to keep going, like, for my health and all. So I did pretty bad in my test and just passed, but it's your health that's more important, right?

While I was looking around on the net I also found that there's a thing called octophobia, a fear of the number eight, and triskadecaphobia, a fear of thirteen. Come to think of it, I was feeling pretty sick in the stomach at the thought of my maths exams which were coming up, maybe I even had numerophobia, which is a fear of all numbers. This thought scared me so I went to talk to my maths lecturer about whether it would be wise for me to keep doing maths. He laughed at me and said that maths didn't use numbers anymore after first year anyway, so I'd be OK. So I decided to keep going with it.

Well, I ended up getting through most of second year OK except for mild photophobia that messed me around in my optics course, oh and I had to drop out of astronomy because I discovered that I had selenophobia (fear of the moon), siderophobia (fear of the stars), barophobia (fear of gravity) and kenophobia (fear of the vacuum) all at once. I really would have been able to deal with that if it wasn't also for the general kosmikophobia, the fear of cosmic phenomena. That was the one that really sent me over the edge, so to speak.

Anyway I thought I'd got back onto the straight and narrow and was learn-





ing to deal with my fears, or avoid the subjects they involved, when I found that I was having a really hard time learning this one physics subject Quantum Mechanics. It was the night before a big assignment was due and I didn't understand anything that was going on, all I knew was that there was this guy called Schrödinger and he killed his cat or something, and Einstein didn't like it. Anyway I'd had three coffees and six cans of V, and at about three in the morning when things looked really hopeless I suddenly got that bad feeling again. I knew it! The reason I didn't understand quantum mechanics must have been coz I had a phobia I didn't know about. I got on the net and after two hours of searching I found what I must have had: hellenologophobia, 'a fear of Greek terms or complex scientific terminology'. Well that explained a lot, like why I wasn't doing so well in maths either.

I had to drop out of physics and I failed maths, but at least it's not my fault, it's because of my medical conditions. They're all legit, you can look on the internet. I thought long and hard about whether to keep on going with physics but decided to drop out of uni altogether. It's too risky, knowing that there are conditions like polyphobia (a fear of many things) and panphobia (a fear of everything)—which would rule out getting too close to the Theory of Everything or the Grand Unified Theory. And besides, I reckon that I've already got didaskaleinophobia (fear of going to uni), sophophobia (fear of learning), oh also epistomophobia and gnosophobia (fears of knowledge—stops me retaining any stuff I've already learnt) and ideophobia (fear of ideas—so I can't come up with anything new myself). I'm just trying to take it easy so I don't develop acute phronemophobia, a fear of thinking altogether.

I'm telling you this so that if you're like me and are the innocent victim of phobias, you can know you're not alone. There's not much public awareness or support when it comes to this crippling and horrible condition. When I told my engineering mates about what had happened to me they just laughed, and one guy wanted sympathy coz he reckoned he had pentherophobia (a fear of his mother-in-law), arachibutyrophobia (a fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of his mouth) and hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia (a fear of long words). Which just goes to show that some people are such awful hypochondriacs and shouldn't be trusted.



Closet Nerd: Cindy Crawford

Cindy Crawford was born on February 20, 1966, in De Kalb, Illinois. She was a straight-A student all through high-school. When she was 16, she was snapped by a photographer while she was working part-



time detasseling corn, which lead to two summers' worth of work at the Elite Modelling Agency in Chicago.

However, when she finished high school, Cindy put her modelling career on hold and enrolled at Northwestern University to study Chemical Engineering. She had been awarded a full academic scholarship.

Cindy studied engineering for one semester before deciding that modelling might be more a more lucrative career. She de-enrolled from university to model full-time for Chicago photographer Victor Skrebneski. She went on to a career as a multimillion-dollar commercial model, TV personality, fitness-video business-woman, and attempted movie star.

The public remains largely unaware of her status as a closet nerd.

POV-RAY

nerd toy

Every issue, the **nerdling** editors battle the evil forces of study and assignments to be able to produce and distribute this zine. However, in the past few months a far greater distractive force has been encountered: the ray-tracing program known as POV-Ray.

POV-Ray stands for ‘Persistence of Vision—Ray Tracer’ and is a program that allows you to create photo-realistic images by simulating the interaction of light with matter. You describe the scene you want to create using a program language very similar to C++, and the computer then renders the final image. The software is supplied free on the internet (visit www.povray.org), is very easy to use (has great help files!), creates stunning images (if you’ve never been able to draw or paint this can be very, very satisfying) and is highly addictive. Trust us.

A typical scene description file looks like this:

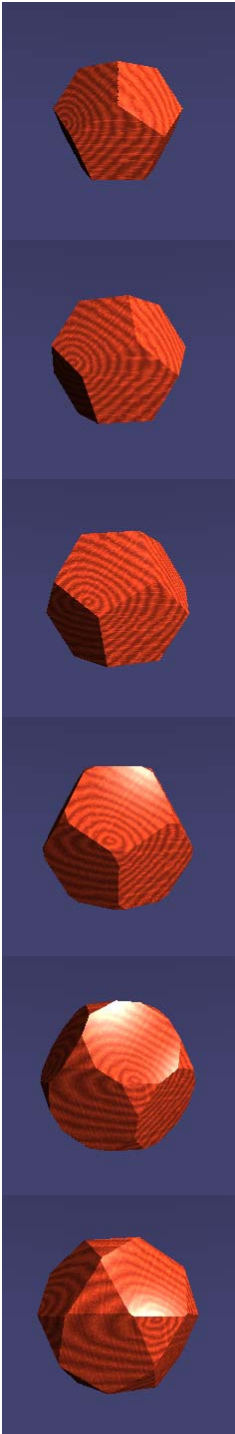
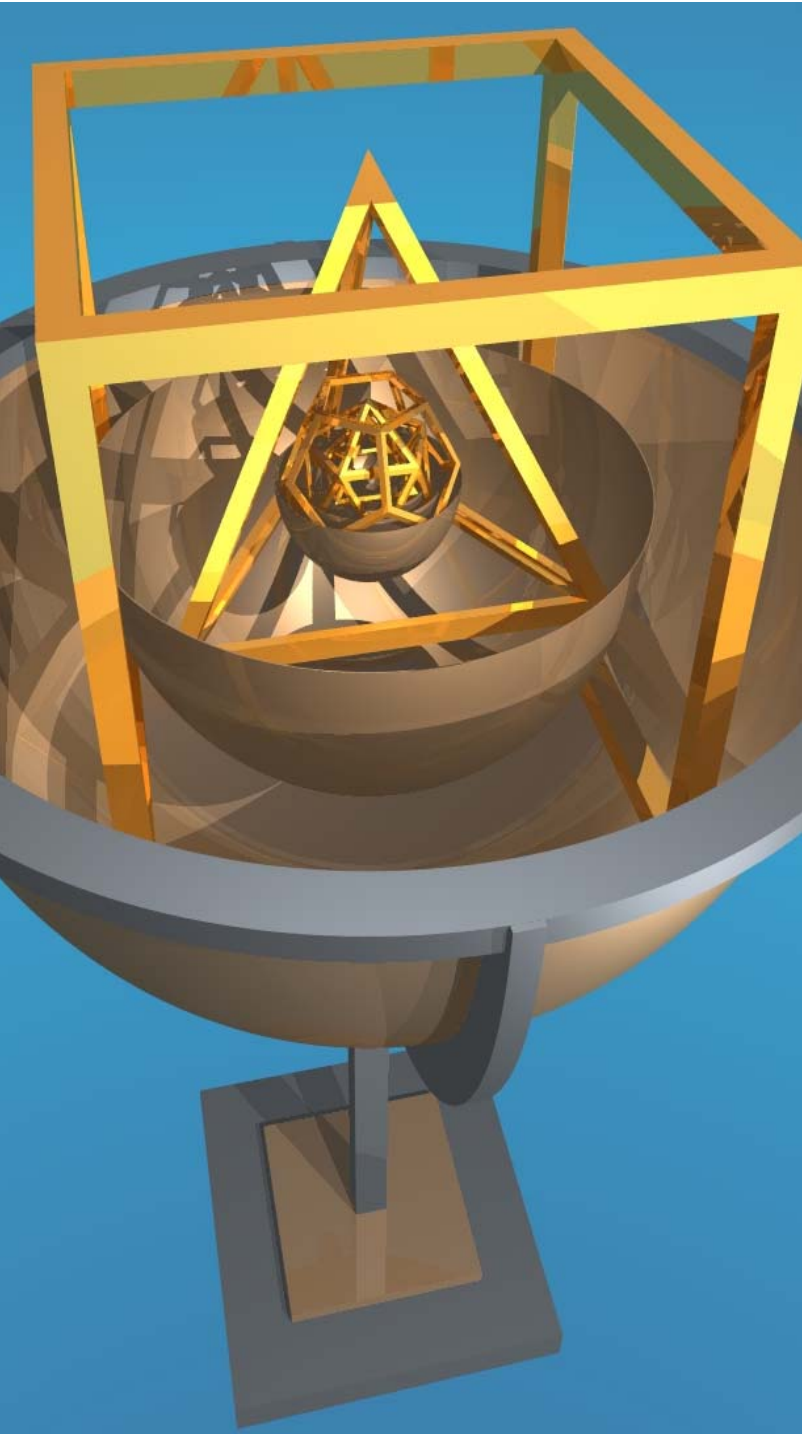
```
background { col or Cyan }
camera {
    location <0, 2, -3>
    look_at <0, 1, 2>
}
sphere {
    <0, 1, 2>, 2
    texture {
        pigment { col or Yellow }
    }
}
light_source { <2, 4, -3> col or White }
```

This scene will have a light blue background, on which a yellow sphere of radius two units is placed. The user specifies any light sources present (without a light, everything in the scene will of course be black), as well as the location of the camera.

POV-Ray then simulates emission of photons from the light source and how they interact with the object and its surrounds, producing apparent colour gradients in objects, shadows and other lighting effects. It’s very easy to set up animations, too.

The examples shown opposite are pictures I’ve created using only the most simple capabilities of POV-Ray. The left-hand picture is a reproduction of a sketch by Kepler, and the right-hand pictures are part of an animation. However, POV-Ray is not limited to modelling geometrical objects. It is relatively easy to create convincing landscapes, for example, including fog, clouds, or bodies of water. Some of the images in the Hall of Fame (see the POV-Ray website) could convince you they were taken with a camera, not coded on a computer.

Download this programme, and we promise you it won’t be long before you look at things around you and immediately start wondering how they’d be coded. Just one warning: don’t download it if you’ve got any big assignments to do.



O NERDS &

Look in the 1330-page Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary for the word *nerd*. In between *Neptunium* (the element) and *Nereid* (a sea-nymph), you'll find a ghastly space. That's right—the cult of nerdism is not officially recognised in the popular English Language.

Further research will finally find a listing of the word, but only in the 20-volume Extended Oxford Dictionary (which is the equivalent of the bottom of a locked filing cabinet stuck in a disused lavatory in an unlit cellar with a sign on the door saying 'beware of the leopard'*). Even there, it's only accorded a few dull and ignorant remarks: *An insignificant or contemptible person, one who is conventional, affected, or studious; a 'square', a 'swot'.*

A what??? And a what??? Nerds everywhere, it is time to rise and defend ourselves against the horrible slander of English professors and etymologists! It is time for the nerd vocabulary to be recognised!

nerdling is leading the charge by presenting this list of nerd terms, all already in use in society and on the internet**, and gathered here together for your benefit. Bring balance to the English language by studying the list well and using the words often. Be a word nerd and get wordy!

energy - When someone devotes a lot of energy to something that is only worth the attention of nerds. *ex. Chester is talking about the relative benefits of PERL with great energy.*

nerd-e-bonics - technical talk used by nerds that normal non-nerd people don't understand. *ex. whoa, slow down Prof Fraser dude, all I'm getting here is a load of nerd-e-bonics.*

nerding out - Having a sudden attack of abnormally high nerdy or geeky feelings and impulses. *ex. "I walked into the computer lab and immediately started nerding out -- I must have drank ten litres of V and sat there programming IDL for eight hours."*

nerdly - (noun: **nerdlinger**). Nerdy, but in a respectable and admirable way. *ex. Can you believe Emma became a member*

* If you get this reference, give yourself a bonus point in the Nerd Quiz on page ____

** Don't believe me? See www.pseudodictionary.com

L WORDS o

of the Astronomical Society? Go nerdlinger!

nerdvana - The infinite bliss of technical or mathematical perfection. *ex. On finding the flaw in the reasoning of Russel's Paradox, I reached nerdvana.*

groomio - A very nerdy, yet sometimes cool guy. *ex. "Oh, that kid, he's such a groomio, I've never seen anyone back into a computer so fast."*

herb - Hip synonym for dork or nerd. *ex. Did you see that guy in the William Gibson shirt? What a herb.*

nuglet - Meaning a friend or lover that is cute but nerdy. *ex. hello Nuglet, how was your day...?*

poindexter - Nerd--from the Poindexter character in the nerd movies. *ex. Don't be jumping around like that--you look like a poindexter.*

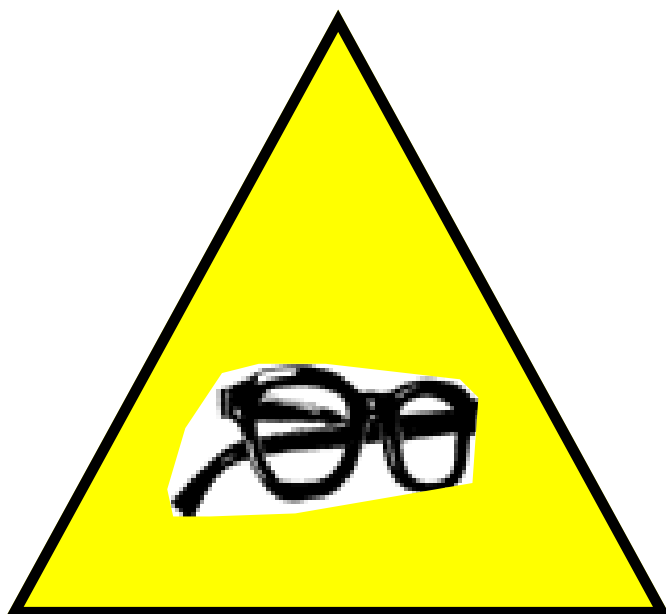
spod - (Noun) The British synonym for the primarily American terms 'nerd' or 'geek'. *ex. David does Java programming simply for his own amusement. What a spod!*

wimperial - The new-found power of computer nerds over everyone else, hence wimperium, wimpire building, wimperor. *ex. As the only member of staff capable of opening an archived email, Colin wielded wimperial power over the audit department.*

wirehead - person possessing an extensive knowledge of electronic circuitry. Before the advent of computer technology, these progenitors of the modern nerd attempted to satisfy their insatiable curiosity by tinkering with radio, television, and telephone circuits. The occasional lethal result of these endeavours served to "thin the herd," thereby ensuring the survival of the geekiest. *ex. Okay, I'm officially a wirehead now; my PC's connected to my stereo, my TV, my phone, my guitar, and a cappuccino machine.*

nerdling - Someone who has joined the **nerdling** cult, hence being well on their way to nerdvana. Brothers and sisters of nerddom, unite.

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NERD FRIENDLY ZONE

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